

PROPOSED POGO GOLD MINE

Environmental Impact Statement Process

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process is underway for Teck-Pogo, Inc.'s proposed Pogo Gold Mine in Alaska. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the project team are evaluating how the proposed project could potentially affect people and the environment.

The team is also developing reasonable project alternatives based on input from the public, tribal governments, and other agencies. Through this EIS process, decision-makers will decide which alternative should be selected. Welcome to the third Update designed to keep you informed and involved in this process.



EIS Draft Under Development

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pogo Gold Mine is being developed now. EPA expects to have the draft ready for public review by late summer or early fall. Over the past year, EPA and the cooperating agencies (Alaska Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) have been working with Teck-Pogo, Inc. on its operating plans. Teck-Pogo, Inc. has proposed some changes to its operations as a result of discussions with the federal and state agencies. The draft EIS will include detailed project plans, an analysis of potential environmental effects of the proposed plan, and will identify other project alternatives along with their respective environmental effects.

EPA is preparing the Draft EIS with the assistance of the consulting firm Michael Baker Jr., Inc. When the draft is complete, the public will have 60 days to review and comment on the document. During the comment period, EPA will host two public hearings: one in Delta Junction, the other in Fairbanks. Stay tuned for information about the date and location of these meetings. EPA will respond to the comments in the Final EIS.

Approximately 30 days after release of the Final EIS, EPA will prepare a Record of Decision (ROD) that documents EPA's final permit decisions regarding the project.

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Web Site: www.epa.gov/r10earth/pogo.htm

The Water Permitting Process

Teck-Pogo, Inc. has applied to EPA for a wastewater discharge permit, or National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, for the Pogo Gold Mine. NPDES permits are required whenever there are discharges of pollutants to waters of the United States from a point source. The draft NPDES permit, prepared by EPA, would have a 30-day public comment period. After issuance of the ROD (see previous article), EPA could issue or deny the final NPDES permit. The Final NPDES permit, if issued, would have a 30-day appeal period. Appeals can be made only by individuals who have commented on the NPDES permit.

Other Agency Authorizations

In addition to EPA's NPDES permit, the proposed Pogo Mine Project would need authorizations from other federal and state agencies. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would have to issue a wetlands fill permit wherever the above-ground facilities, such as the mill and any access roads, would necessitate filling wetlands. The State of Alaska agencies, such as the Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, would also need to issue authorizations in order for the project to proceed. These authorizations could include right-of-way permits for access roads and utilities, and a solid waste permit for tailings disposal. The State of Alaska expects to have drafts of its authorizations published along with the Draft EIS for public review.

All agencies are working cooperatively with EPA to integrate their permit processes with the EIS process, and will endeavor to combine public reviews and notices wherever possible. Matthew Harrington, the EPA project contact, can direct you to the appropriate federal or state official if you have questions about these authorizations.



Pogo Mine Proposal: A Recap

Teck-Pogo, Inc. proposes to develop the Pogo Gold Mine on state-owned land about 38 miles northeast of Delta Junction (see map on next page). It would be an underground mine with a surface mill producing up to 500,000 ounces of gold each year. Ore would be processed using gravity separation and cyanide vat leaching.

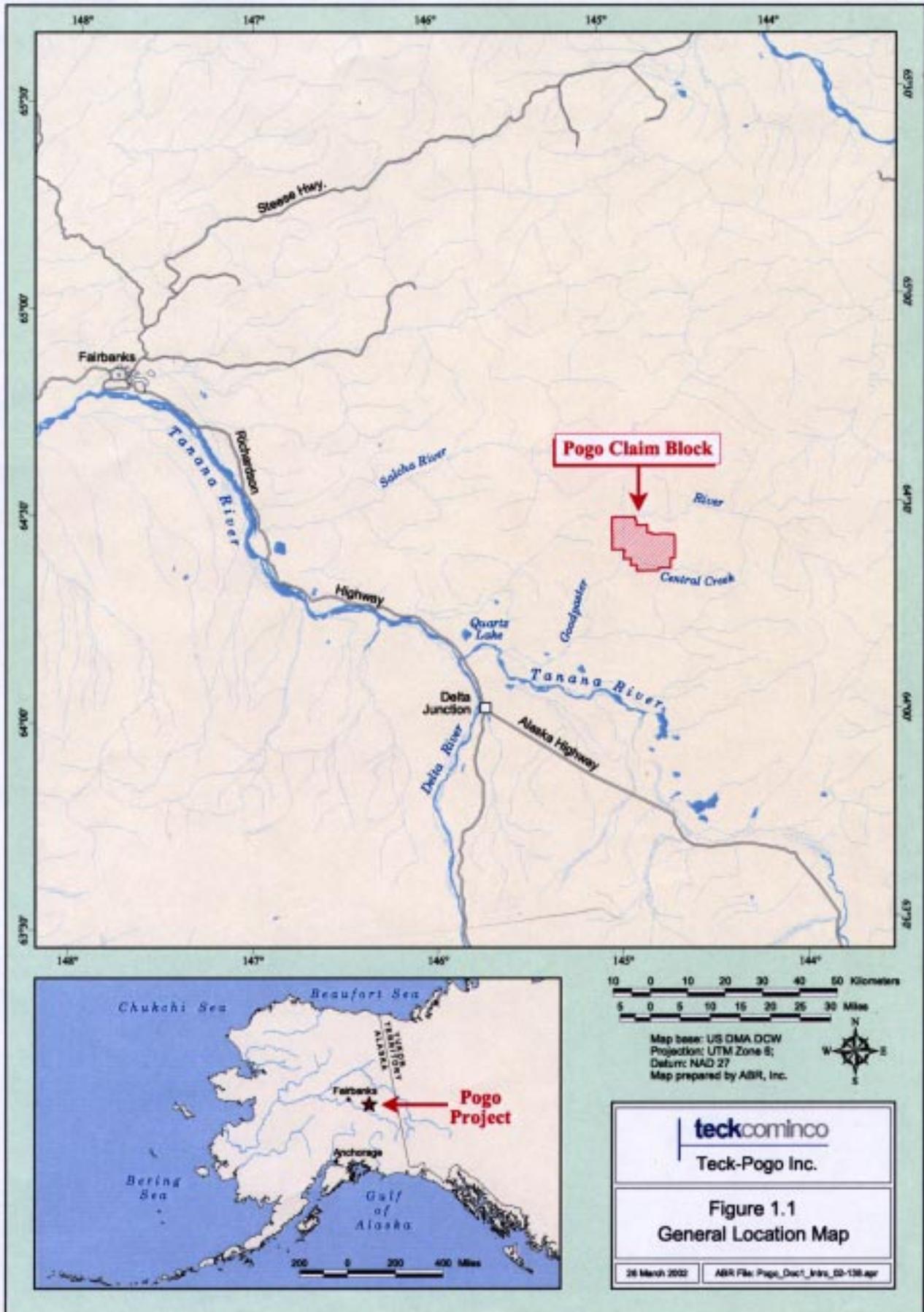
About 10 percent of the crushed rock left over after the gold has been removed would contain cyanide. This material would be treated to destroy the cyanide and returned underground. Two road-access options are being considered: an all-season road and a winter-only road. For each option, there is more than one route under consideration. More detailed project information will be provided in the Draft EIS.



Government-to-Government Consultation Continues

The federal government is required by law to recognize and consult with federally recognized tribes as sovereign nations. EPA is working with thirteen tribes determined to be potentially affected by the proposed Pogo Gold Mine, in a government-to-government consultation effort. EPA will give Tribal Governments an advance opportunity to review the draft EIS, and carry out direct communications and possible meetings with the tribes.

Web Site: www.epa.gov/r10earth/pogo.htm





Public Involvement Plan

In the first Update (January 2001), EPA published the draft Public Involvement Plan for the Pogo Mine Environmental Impact Statement Process. We encouraged readers to review and comment on the plan. EPA received comments from eleven individuals. For a copy of comments received and EPA's responses to them, view the web site, visit an information repository, or contact Matthew Harrington.

Below is the revised Public Involvement Plan. Revisions made in response to comments are highlighted in bold. Other changes have been made to reflect the current status of activities.

Public Involvement Plan: Pogo Mine Environmental Impact Statement Process

Public involvement is an important part of the Pogo Mine Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Process. Community input continues to be vital, and the project team is committed to providing meaningful public involvement opportunities throughout the process.

EPA welcomes the participation of all interested parties.

This Public Involvement Plan lays out activities designed to ensure that members of the public get the information they want, have opportunities to provide input to decisions that could have long-term effects on their communities, and feel confident that their views are considered in EPA's decisions. This plan is intended to be a flexible document that can be revised based on the needs of the public for information and input.

Scoping

The Pogo Mine EIS effort began with the "Scoping" process. Scoping is designed to ensure that all significant issues are fully addressed during the EIS evaluation. In August 2000, EPA sent out a Scoping Document to a wide range of interested government agencies, Tribes, public groups and individuals. The document previewed the proposed project and asked for participation and input. Many comments were received during the 60-day public comment period. Also, EPA hosted open houses in Fairbanks and Delta Junction. About 50 people attended each open house. The open houses offered community members an opportunity to learn more about the proposed project and to share their comments. A scoping responsiveness summary, which summarizes comments and describes how EPA intends to address them, is available on the web site, at the information repositories, or from the project contact.

Tribal Consultation

The federal government is required by law to recognize and consult with federally recognized tribes as sovereign nations.

In August 2000, EPA began the Tribal consultation process. This process involves EPA working directly, on a government-to-government basis, with thirteen Tribes that may be affected by the project. A special effort is in progress to engage Tribes in the Pogo EIS process and ensure that Tribal interests are represented. Consultations are proposed both prior to and following all public meetings on the EIS. To view the consultation plan, visit the web site or the information repositories.

Web Site: www.epa.gov/r10earth/pogo.htm

Updates

Updates will be published at key points in the EIS process and be sent to everyone on the project mailing list. They will also be available at the Information Repositories listed below. Updates will strive to present technical material in a way that is understandable to people with no scientific or engineering background. Each Update will provide project updates, information about public involvement opportunities, and supplemental information as needed.

Web Site

EPA's web site offers detailed information about the Pogo Mine EIS process. The site can be found on the Internet at www.epa.gov/r10earth/pogo.htm. **Specific suggestions for making the site useful and easy to navigate are always welcome.**

Graphics

Highly technical project planning documents will be translated into perspective drawings and other graphic formats that can be easily understood by members of the general public. These illustrations will be included in Updates, posted on the web sites, and displayed at public meetings.

Russian Community Outreach

To foster an inclusive process, and to comply with an Environmental Justice executive order, EPA will ensure that the Russian immigrant community in Delta Junction has an opportunity to participate. EPA will translate certain project materials into the Russian language and work through appropriate cultural networks.

Public Review of Draft EIS

An extended 60-day public comment period will be provided for review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. **This extended period is offered due to the complexity of the project, the high degree of public interest, and to ensure that the public has adequate time to review and comment on the document.** All public comments received in writing, via e-mail, or verbally presented for the record at a public hearing will be considered during preparation of the final EIS. EPA will prepare detailed comment responses.

Public Hearings

Two public hearings will be held during the Draft EIS public review period. One will be held in Fairbanks, the other in Delta Junction. At the hearings, the public will have an opportunity to hear first-hand from project team representatives, view exhibits, ask questions, and present oral and written comments on the Draft EIS.

Information Repositories

Updates, background studies, and draft reports will be available at the Noel Wien Library (1215 Cowles Street) in Fairbanks, the Delta Junction Public Library (2288 Deborah Street), and the Tribal Offices in the 13 villages identified as being potentially affected.

Mailing List

A mailing list of interested parties has been compiled. The list will be updated regularly. Individuals can be added to the list upon their own request.

Project Contact

Matt Harrington is the point of contact on this project. He is available to hear your suggestions and concerns, and answer your questions throughout the project evaluation process. You may contact him in writing, via e-mail, or by phone:

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Updated EIS Schedule

As indicated in last October's Update #2, the original EIS schedule shifted as the applicant conducted more work and analysis to refine aspects of project design. Here is a best estimate of when key milestones are likely to occur.

<u>Upcoming Activity</u>	<u>Estimated Timeframe</u>
Draft EIS out for 60-day public review and public hearings	Late Summer/Early Fall 2002
Final EIS	Winter 2002
Record of Decision and NPDES decision	Open

For people with disabilities: Please contact Andrea Lindsay at 206/553-1896 or toll-free at 1-800-424-4372 (x1896) if you have requests for reasonable accommodations. TTY users, call the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 and give the operator a number listed above.